

E. A. GORDON

Pioneer  
in  
East-West  
Religious Understanding



A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

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PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY, INC.  
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#### PART I



ifty years ago there were antiquarian book dealers in most of the larger American cities. Each of these establishments was presided over by a genteel bibliophile who conveyed the impression of vast learning, and overflowing hospitality. New books were seldom to be found in his stock, for he specialized in first editions, autographed works of literary immortals, pamphlets, broadsides, and fugitive fragments from famous presses. He catered to scholars seeking elusive reference material, and avid collectors hoping to add new treasures to their private libraries. It was while browsing in the pleasant chaos of my favorite second-hand book store, that I was introduced to the writings of E. A. Gordon. On a heavily burdened shelf stood a set of two volumes, octavo in faded blue cloth and badly shaken at the hinges. Stepping closer I read the title, *The "World-Healers," or The Lotus Gospel and its Bodhisattvas*.

Turning a few pages, my attention was attracted to the author's preface, which convinced me that E. A. Gordon had an extraordinary grasp of both Western and Eastern religions, especially mystical Christianity and esoteric Buddhism. The following extract indicates the basic concepts which were unfolded in the text.

"That TRUTH has no monopoly—whether in East or West—is a matter for deepest gratitude; and that those Facts on which Christ, the MESSIAH, based His Message regarding the Infinitude of the Life, Love, and Wisdom of God, the supernatural character of His Kingdom, the miraculous Powers of the Invisible world, and the Life Immortal of the Soul (which begins in the Knowledge of God on *this* side of the River of Death), are as precious to the Mahayanists in High Asia as to Western Christians, should be a source of purest joy to every disinterested Seeker after Truth.



Portrait of Mrs. Gordon which appears in her book, *Symbols of the Way*, 1916.



"That modern Christianity would be deepened and spiritualized beyond conception by coming into contact with the Teachings of the venerable Mahayana and their expression in the wondrous Art Treasures of the Far East, there is very little doubt."

I purchased the set immediately, and now after more than forty years, it stands in quiet dignity in a bookcase near my desk. It has proved to be an invaluable reference work, and I have had recourse to it on a number of occasions, and have referred to these volumes in several articles on comparative religion.

E. A. Gordon proved to be Lady Elizabeth Anna Gordon, a member of the Society of Biblical Archaeology; the Japan Society, London; the Korean Branch of the Asiatic Society; and the World's Chinese Students Federation of Shanghai. Lady Gordon had written a number of books, and I inquired for them among friendly booksellers in England. We even advertised through the trades, but received no responses. It was only by accident that additional information about Lady Gordon came to my attention, and I have been able to assemble the material for the present monograph on the fiftieth anniversary of her death.

One naturally likes to know something about the life and accomplishments of a favorite author, but unfortunately there is very little biographical information available about Lady Gordon. Most of the persons who knew her, or were associated with the projects which dominated her interests, are now deceased, and usually reliable sources of biographical research material have consistently ignored this very talented woman. Several of the dealers whom I had hoped would prove useful, were bombed out during World War II and never reopened their shops.

In recent years I have taken several trips to Japan, and on one of these journeys I made the acquaintance of Mr. K. Shimizu who had a fascinating art shop in Yokohama. He always met me at the Tokyo airport, and later visited in my home. One day I asked if he had ever heard of a Lady Elizabeth A. Gordon, and he assured me that she was an old friend of his family, and had purchased religious antiquities in his store. He knew nothing of her life in England, but gave me valuable leads relating to her residence in Japan.

He added that he had a photograph of Lady Gordon, probably her last picture, and offered to provide me with a copy which arrived shortly before his death. It now seemed possible that biographical data could be secured from her Japanese acquaintances, and with this encouragement I decided to make an intensive effort to assemble an account of her life.

Having finally secured copies of nearly all of her printed works, it has been possible to gain considerable insight into the character of this most unusual lady. She carefully avoided references to personal affairs, but a few facts can be gathered from the great number of book reviews in English and foreign publications. Some interesting data was made available to me by the Assistant Keeper of the State Paper Room at the British Museum, who apologized for the paucity of material in the archives of the museum. He was unable to supply even the dates of her birth and death, but the library of the Koyasan Monastery at Mount Koya in Japan, provided some valuable details. From this source we learned that she died in 1925 at the age of 76, which would mean that she was born about 1849.

According to the British Museum records, Elizabeth Anna Gordon, nee Henry, was the daughter of John Snowdon Henry of Bon Church, Isle of Wight. John Snowdon Henry (1824-1896) was the son of Alexander Henry of Manchester. John Snowdon was a partner of cotton exporters, and a Member of Parliament from South-east Lancashire from 1868 to 1874. Elizabeth Anna Henry wrote her first books using her initials, E.A.H. on the title pages. In 1879, she married the Hon. John Edward Gordon, eldest son of Lord Edward Gordon of Drumearn, a Scottish judge. In the genealogies of the Gordon family, it is stated that Edward Strathearn Gordon, Baron Gordon of Drumearn (1814-1879), was educated at Inverness Academy and Edinburgh University. He was created a Peer for life in 1876, and actually held the peerage for less than three years. John Edward, as his eldest son, carried the title, "Honorable" which probably explains why his wife, Elizabeth Anna, was generally referred to as the Hon. Mrs. Gordon, or Lady Gordon. All that the British Museum records provide beyond this point is that Lady Gordon spent the latter part of her life in the Far East.



Lacking other substantiated facts of Lady Gordon's life in Mid-Victorian England, we must turn to her various writings for such circumstantial evidence as they provide. It is evident that she was a well-educated woman, but there is no hint concerning her schooling. Assuming that she followed the pattern of young ladies of her time, she may have been privately tutored, and then sent to finishing school to be instructed in the social graces of her generation, but such opportunities would scarcely explain the literary career that followed. There were many brilliant writers in 19th Century England, but very few of them were addicted to abstruse subjects, or had the command of knowledge which she exhibited. Accomplishments such as hers required a background not generally available to refined ladies. Of course, it is possible that she was self-educated, and if so she was a person of phenomenal abilities. In a letter to Dr. Paul Carus published in *The Open Court*, (see pp. 39 & 40) she states that she had studied with her dear friend, Max Muller, and realized the importance of historical data. Max Muller was one of the world's outstanding Orientalists, who after retiring from a professorship at Oxford, devoted his life to the editing of the fifty-two volume edition of *The Sacred Books of the East*. A scholar of this calibre must have recognized Lady Gordon as well qualified for serious study, or he would never have accepted her as a student.

All of her writings follow one basic form—her style is so concise that it would be virtually impossible to abridge or make a digest of their contents. Nearly every paragraph includes quotations from authorities, ancient and modern, to support the point she wishes to make. She has an excellent literary style, which a number of reviewers mention with admiration, and so diversified is her source material that she must have had a phenomenal memory. It is clearly indicated that she is not advancing opinions or beliefs of her own, but is dealing with well-authenticated facts. With the exception of a few references to World War I, her writings reveal no emotional pressure. She does not dramatize her findings, but at the same time her books have great impact and can stir a variety of sentiments in her reader.

Basically Lady Gordon was a devout and intelligent Christian.



Professor F. Max Muller. Portrait in a catalog issued on the 50th Anniversary of his receiving the Doctor's Degree at the University of Leipsig, and his 70th birthday.



Most of her writings deal with sacred literature, and even her travelogue, "*Clear 'Round!*" emphasizes the spiritual and moral aspects of human character in the countries which she visited. In early life, she made an extensive study of the Bible, and her publications of this period were favorably reviewed by both Protestant and Catholic journals. She had a flair for hagiology, and frequently paralleled the lives of Western saints with their Oriental counterparts. There is also a quantity of information concerning the ancient beliefs of the Celtic nations. Lady Gordon believed that the Messianic Dispensation was a divine revelation to all humanity, and that the members of the various religious groups shared together the eternal Truth as revealed in the Scriptures. Her labor was to bind up the wounds of theological controversy by showing the identity of the Truth which they all contain. In this sense there was no need for conversion, but as Truth itself has many aspects, and is presented to human consciousness in numerous forms, we can all learn from each other, and comparative religion reveals the several paths that lead to the same end.

In "*Clear 'Round!*," she found substantial evidence of God's Wisdom and Mercy in the family lives of the Koreans, Chinese and Japanese. It seemed to her that all peoples near and far, had something to teach us about character and conduct. As we try to bring our light to others, we should also be grateful for the light that they can bring to us. Lady Gordon highly respected the Christian missionaries working in Asia, and made no distinction between Catholic and Protestant laborers in the vineyard. As a result of this attitude, Catholic publications recommended "*Clear 'Round!*" as a valuable aid in the instruction of young people. Even in Japan, where she studied esoteric Buddhism under highly qualified instructors, there was no prejudice against her and every effort was made to assist her work of reconciling Buddhism and Christianity.

Sustained by her realization of interreligious unity, Lady Gordon also examined the ancient beliefs and monuments in Egypt and in the Valley of the Euphrates. She skillfully interprets ancient Assyrian writings and symbols, bringing a fuller and more vital meaning to the faiths of these ancient people. Her insight was so penetrating that it deeply impressed Archibald Henry Sayce, the out-



Assyrian carving depicting the fight between Light and Darkness, from a relief carving in the British Museum. Describing this, Lady Gordon writes, ". . . this fight between Chaos and Order began as early as the Creation, that it is a daily, hourly conflict, any of you shall find who try to keep things straight, to right the wrong, preventing waste, dirt and disease, falsehood, ignorance, and superstition."

(See *Clear 'Round*)

standing Assyriologist of his time, who stated that he had been instructed by her learning and research, and amazed by the extent of it. One of the keys to her diversified abilities which is likely to be overlooked by modern scholars, is that she worked from an archetypal pattern in her own mind, and was able to apply this to all systems of religion successfully. Her researches in Egyptology followed the same general procedure, and she quotes from numerous papyri and tomb inscriptions to support her Assyrian labors.

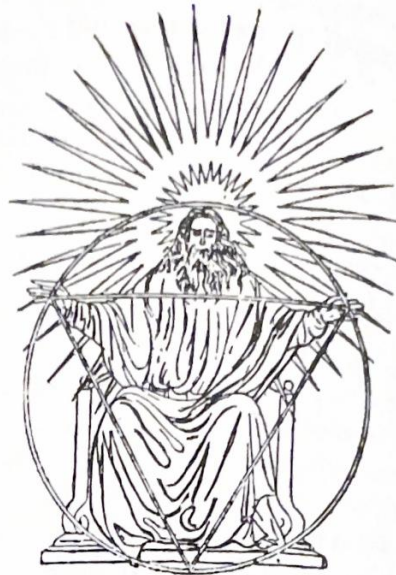
Lady Gordon's early writings were based principally upon Bible studies. They were small fugitive volumes, and the reviews concerning them appeared mostly in publications dealing with theology and the field of foreign missions. The earliest book to which we can find reference, is *Things Touching The King, A Key to the Tabernacle and Its Lessons*. We have not been able to see a copy, but it was published not later than 1880, probably under the initials E.A.H. A review in the *Christian Standard* states, "We have not often seen so much of the central truths of the Gospels brought forward with equal clearness in the exposition, particularly in portions of the Old Testament." Two other reviews are in harmony with the above, and one of them notes that, "Teachers of Bible classes will find it a useful help in study."

Next in order is *The Glories of Christ, As Set Forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews and A Series of Bible Readings*, by E.A.H. The Library of Congress card dates the work incompletely as 188..., but other references date it before 1881. This volume has been made available to us through the courtesy of Biola University Library. There is an introduction by Reverend Stevenson A. Blackwood, later known as Sir Arthur Blackwood (1832-1893) in which he notes that the material originally appeared weekly in the pages of the *Christian*. That he was deeply impressed with the work can be gathered from his statement, "I earnestly trust that a great blessing may attend the issue of these Notes in a more connected form, and that they may be graciously used by God the Holy Ghost for the quickening, strengthening, and encouragement of every one who reads them." It is also interesting that the world-famous English Non-Conformist Divine, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), "greatly valued" the book, adding, "Our authoress often



The Divine Triplicity contained within Unity, from a German Renaissance engraving of the 16th Century. The Deity is represented measuring the diameter of the Gothic Eternal Circle, with the Romanesque Triangle. Lady Gordon notes the double halo, one encircling the head, and the other enclosing the upper part of the body. This type of nimbus is frequently found in Buddhist art.

(See *World Healers*, etc.)



sheds a valuable side-light upon a passage, and at other times, by setting one portion of Scripture over against another, she produces a blended light which is even more useful."

A quotation from *Book Fund and Its Work*, 1881-82 states that "... the book fund's Memorial Present this year to the assembled pastors (three hundred at the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pastor's College Conference, 1881) is a little volume entitled, *The Glories of Christ*—rich in suggestion, and teeming with hints." From this it is evident that the articles which appeared in the *Christian* were issued in book form for distribution at the time of the Conference. The work itself consists almost exclusively of quotations from the Epistle to the Hebrews, so arranged that scattered references are brought together thus adding further insight into the meaning of the original text.

The last of Lady Gordon's books to bear a London imprint is *Temples of the Orient and Their Message in the Light of Holy Scripture, Dante's Vision and Bunyan's Allegory*, London, 1902. Her name does not appear on the title page, but it is stated to be by the author of "*Clear 'Round!*" and she describes it as a sequel



and interpretation of this work. A map folded in at the front on this work indicates the area with which Lady Gordon was concerned. This map is described as . . . "showing the ancient sanctuaries of the Old World and their relation to Abraham's pilgrimage." The regions depicted extend from approximately thirty to fifty degrees east longitude, and from twenty to forty degrees north latitude. Mount Ararat is at the extreme north of the area, and Mecca at the south. It includes Egypt, the Holy Land and reaches as far eastward as Ancient Babylonia and Ur of the Chaldees. The book reveals intimate knowledge of the ancient civilizations referred to in the Bible, and there are many translations from early tablets. Referring to the monuments of this area, she writes, "The temples were miniature productions of the arrangement of the universe; the zikkurat represented in its form the Mountain of Earth; the halls ranged at its feet resembling the accessory part of the world, 'the Great House,' *i.e.* 'Temple of Arâlu,' being a Cave beneath the earth."

In a footnote she states that the word, ". . . mound, is the heraldic term for the ball, or globe, the sign of sovereign authority and majesty, and forms part of the regalia of an emperor or king."

We can summarize the intent of the author of this extraordinary work in her own words from the preface, "It is felt that, in face of the facts now disclosed, it should be impossible to make the unblushing mis-statement still alas, to be found in certain 'missionary' magazines, viz . . . : that non-Christians 'pray to a God who never heard or answered a single prayer that was offered to him.'"

In contrast to these learned endeavors was Lady Gordon's profound concern over the education of children. She took the attitude that a child is a "young person" with greater mental potentials and more common sense than many adults. The review of her book "*Clear 'Round!*," which appeared in *The Athenaeum*, states clearly that her travelogue was written for the benefit of her children. If this is true, the dedication in the book to "Marjorie and Her Brothers" would imply that she had at least three children of her own. She considered it little better than sacrilegious to write "down" to children. If you express your thoughts in clear and simple language, and the subject matter is interesting, they will gain greater insights

into the world in which they live, and the wonders of human nature.

In the Third Edition of "*Clear 'Round!*," there is inserted at the end the reprint of an article titled *Child Culture*, which appeared first in *The Parent's Review*, November 1891, and may have inspired the publication of her travelogue. In this article, Lady Gordon divides literature available for the young into two categories: lesson books and story books. Under the heading of lesson books are texts used in formal schooling. They are mostly uninspiring and do little to capture the interest of juvenile scholars. Story books, on the other hand, come under the heading of pleasure reading and generally hold attention. She regrets that most pleasure reading is empty of value. In some cases it is not only non-factual but anti-factual, and such literature absorbed in considerable quantities, can be detrimental to the child's character. She goes so far as to suggest that parents should read adult books to children, substituting simple words for more complicated ones as they go along. In this way learning is dramatized, associated with happenings that have contributed to the arts, sciences, philosophies and religions. A good child's book should be read with pleasure by an adult, for after all, the child-mind remains in us to the end.

Even in her most serious books, Lady Gordon presents her material in a manner quite comprehensible to teenagers, unless their minds have been prejudiced against the ideas which she sets forth. Her thinking can be appreciated by the following quotation: "Quite little ones will evince, in a perfectly natural, child-like way, a lively interest in seeing photographs of, and hearing about, all the inner 'funny' (i.e. interesting) places and foreign lands. For instance, a child of five to six will recognize models of the Forum at Rome, the Coliseum, the Arch of Titus, the Piazza in front of St. Peter's with its cross-surmounting obelisk, brought centuries ago to the Circus of Caligula from the City of the Sun in Egypt (where Joseph and Moses lived) . . ."

Lady Gordon strongly emphasized the importance of travel for young people. On the title page of "*Clear 'Round!*" she quotes a Japanese proverb, "Send the child you love on a journey." In the 1903 Edition of the same work, another quotation is added in a



St. Barbara with her tower and feather. According to Lady Gordon the allegory of St. Barbara's tower was introduced into Europe by the Crusaders in the 11th Century from the East. The large peacock feather is an early Eastern symbol of immortality, and in some instances she is depicted like Kannon Bosatsu with the tower or pagoda on her forehead.

(See *World Healers*, etc.)



similar spirit, "One year's travel abroad is more profitable than study at home for five." (Chang Chi Tung—Chinese Viceroy, 1902). This brings into focus another question about which we can only speculate. It is quite possible that she travelled extensively before her trip around the world. In her day the "grand tour" was almost mandatory for young women of good families. Such trips included the principal centers of European culture, with emphasis upon France, Germany and Italy. Most of Lady Gordon's writings indicate her familiarity with the architecture of the cathedrals, churches, and monasteries in these countries; and her familiarity with religious lore suggests more intimate acquaintance with local conditions than she could derive from reading. In her later years, she may well have remembered the personal benefits of early travel.

The Rev. John Peters, D.D., author of a work referred to as *Nippur*, who excavated sites in the Near East, wrote a letter to Lady Gordon upon receipt of a copy of her book, *The Temples of the Orient and Their Message*. He thanks her for the gift of the volume adding, "Some of the best work that has ever been done, has been done by those who are, like yourself, confirmed invalids, and through faith and hope work against odds." Although the nature of her health problems are not stated, they are also referred to during the Japanese period of her life. Whatever her handicap may have been, she was able to reach remote Buddhist temples of Korea, and made the arduous ascent of Mount Koya on more than one occasion. In her essay on Korean discoveries, she notes that her bearers were unable to reach The Chapel of Sokkuram because of the difficult terrain, and she had to complete the journey on foot. She may also have used the Japanese version of the sedan chair when visiting Mount Koya, but again some parts of the journey could only be made by walking.

The dedication in her book, *The Temples of the Orient and Their Message*, reads, "Dedicated to the dear comrades of my study, who have been as eyes and hands to me," might well suggest that she had some type of health affliction as early as 1902. Her letter to Dr. Paul Carus, which was reprinted in the *Open Court* (see p. 39) includes a statement, "You see that being very delicate, and with eyes troubling me . . ." which would indicate that she suffered for many years with physical infirmities, especially eye trouble. This is sustained by the Japanese accounts which note that she was in need of physical assistance during most of her stay in Kyoto.

We know that Lady Gordon and her husband made a trip around the world in 1891-92. We have no further data on her personal life until she established residence in Japan some time after 1900. The first of her publications to be printed in Japan, strongly emphasizing Japanese culture, appeared in 1909. This leaves a considerable period without biographical landmarks. The edition of "*Clear 'Round!*," published in 1903 has changes in the title page, and the appendix on child culture, which from the footnote she had decided to include in the work. There was a new preface dated



1903 in this edition and it is probable therefore, that she did not leave England until after this date. In none of her later writings are there any references to her husband and children, and we are left to conjecture on the circumstances which caused her to leave England and never return. It may well be that she was irresistibly drawn to the Far East, for she was already a member of the Japan Society in 1892. Her dedication to the reconciliation of Eastern and Western religions could have taken precedence over every other consideration. The children for whom she wrote in 1892, would no longer bind her to a home.

St. Francis Xavier, who arrived in Japan in 1549, was deeply impressed by the people of this distant land. He found the Japanese a gentle, kindly and intelligent nation, and went so far as to note that they were living by as high a moral code as any Christian people. Lady Gordon probably had the same experience, and I can testify that returning to Japan after forty years absence, my reaction was the same. Furthermore, it was among the esoteric sects of Japanese Buddhism that Lady Gordon could most rapidly advance her researches in oriental philosophy. Impressed by the obvious parallels between the rituals of higher Buddhism and Catholicism, she would find many keys to spiritual mysteries no longer available in Europe. It may have been that her non-Christian interests may not have been acceptable in Protestant England. An independent career far from home brings up the delicate matter of finance. She may have had substantial means in her own right through inheritance from her father. It is almost certain that she was not supported by her early writings, for books on religion have always had a limited circulation. While her travelogue, "*Clear 'Round!*" may have brought some royalties, she may have paid for the printing herself. The scarcity of her books suggests that they appeared only in limited editions.

Mr. Yokoyama, a most reputable Japanese art dealer who was very close to her in Kyoto, told me that she often purchased Buddhist works of art in his store. She evidently had funds available for various purposes, but Mr. Yokoyama was convinced that she did not support herself from any gainful activities while in his country.



St. Ambrose, Primate of the Gallican Church (340-397 A.D.). Lady Gordon points out that the Saint carries the Eastern Flebellum, and the buckle on the robe contains the same design as that on the crown of Dainichi Nyorai, the Shingon symbol of Universal Light.  
(See *Asian Christology*.)



A portrait of Lady Gordon which appeared in her book "Clear 'Round."

It is evident from Lady Gordon's writings that "all knowledge was her province." She was not only well equipped to handle the various subjects which she developed with extraordinary skill, but had a general background in world literature enabling her to find appropriate support for every statement that she made. Even *The Athenaeum*, a most distinguished English publication in belles lettres, was more or less overwhelmed at the number of quotations, references and asides, which Lady Gordon inserted in her travelogue. From *The Athenaeum*, January 6, 1894:

"... we find long quotations, amongst others, from Addison, Akbar (the great Mogul), Sir Edwin Arnold, St. Augustine, Archbishop Benson, General Booth, Robert Browning, Buddha, John Bunyan, Lord Byron, Confucius, Coleridge, Columbus, Dante, Darwin, Lord Dufferin, Faber, the Emperor Frederick, General Gordon, Goethe, Pope Gregory (the Great), Bishop Heber, Georg Herbert, Herodotus, Homer, Keble, Kingsley, Sir Henry Lawrence, Isaiah, Lecky, Livingstone, Longfellow, Lovelace, George MacDonald, Marco Polo, Maximus of Tyre, Michael Angelo, Michelet, Max Muller, Napoleon, Newton (not Sir Isaac, but the converted sailor John Newton!), Plato, Pliny, Sir Walter Scott, Shakespeare



(without the musical glasses), Bishop Smith of Victoria, Archbishop Tait, Bayard Taylor, Tennyson, Mark Twain, of course Queen Victoria, Wesley, Whittier, Lord Wolseley, Wordsworth, and St. Francis Xavier. Mrs. Gordon brings her journal to a termination by a quotation from Whittier, a long Buddhist prayer, and three lines from Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur.' "

It would appear that much of this information was available to the author before becoming a "planet pilgrim," as she expresses it. She did not stay long enough in any one area during her trip to assemble her historical, religious and cultural data, from local sources. She reports things directly observed, and then calls upon her own studies for interpretive details.

The most popular of Lady Gordon's books by far, is "*Clear 'Round!*" *Seeds of Story from Other Countries. A Chronicle of Links and Rivets in This World's Girdle*. The earliest edition of this book listed in the Library of Congress index is dated 1893, but states that it is a "new edition." If there was an earlier printing, it was probably in 1892. There is also a reprint in 1895, and a new edition in 1903 containing an appendix and the statement that the work is included in *Low's Library of Adventure and Travel*. All editions include an introductory letter by Professor Max Muller, the most distinguished philologist of his day. "... I was also deeply interested by the excellent spirit which pervades the book and which becomes more and more pronounced as you become acquainted with the practical working of non-Christian religions. I have passed through the same experience from reading the Sacred Books of the different religions of the world which you have passed through from coming into actual contact with them."

The review in *The Athenaeum* describes Lady Gordon's book, "*Clear 'Round!*" as a series of pleasant letters written during a trip around the world lasting "three and a half blissful months." Stated briefly, the trip began in Liverpool and after a stormy passage, the ship ascended the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. Here the travelers took the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver where they met the Steamship Empress of India, which cruised along the Bering Strait route and arrived at Japan in due time. Here the Gordons visited a number of important Japanese culture centers including



Yokohama, Tokyo and Nikko. As the train service had been disrupted by an earthquake, it was necessary to take a boat to Kobe and travel up the Inland Sea to Osaka and Kyoto. The voyage continued to Hong Kong and Canton with a brief stop at Singapore. They then followed the eastern coastline of India to Ceylon, and up the west coast to Bombay, which seems to have been reached on Christmas Day. From Bombay they travelled by land to Agra, and continued as far east as Benares. Returning to Bombay, they paused to examine the Caves of Elephanta. From here the journey continued on through the Arabian Sea to Aden, and passed through the Suez Canal on January 9. After exploring the Egyptian area, the Gordons reached Alexandria where they embarked for home, via the Mediterranean.

"*Clear 'Round!*" was extensively reviewed in diversified publications. It was considered recommended reading for Catholics and Protestants, and could be appropriately recommended to the members of the armed forces. Many of the reviews mention the relatively large amount of space in the volume devoted to Japan. The *Eastern World*, (Yokohama) May 19, 1894, pays a sincere tribute to Lady Gordon, "A good woman has gone round the world and describes what she saw in a simple unassuming way, as she saw it, without prejudice or preconceived opinions, and dedicated the book to her children." Lady Gordon's special interest in Japan is indicated in *Scotsman*, July 17, 1893, "The chapters on Japanese life and manners are specially bright and interesting. Mrs. Gordon enters with sympathy into the Japanese character and tastes, their domestic ways and natural sentiments, and has made a special study of child-life among this charming Eastern people."

Even though her first stay in Japan was brief, Lady Gordon was finally impelled to turn her research endeavors to the quest for Christian landmarks in the Far East. Japan has been called one vast religious and archaeological museum. It was sufficiently separated from the mainland to remain aloof from the disturbances which plagued China and Korea. Until recently, most students of Oriental life have found Japan indispensable as a source of information on Eastern culture in general, including from Formosa to Persia, and even Byzantium. The Shosoin at Nara is the oldest surviving museum in the world, and it has remained untouched by natural dis-

asters and vandalism for nearly 1,300 years. Here are still stored Sassanian fabrics and relics from the caravan routes that led from China to Samarkand. The murals, now destroyed, which decorated the Horyu-ji Temple, were inspired by the cave paintings of Ellora and Ajanta in India. Nestorian Christianity certainly reached Japan at an early date, and Mahayana Buddhism, which especially fascinated Lady Gordon, has its last great strongholds at Mount Koya and Mount Hiei on the Yamato Plain in Central Japan. In her day this area was still comparatively untouched by Western commercialism and industry. The people lived as they had for centuries, preserving and enriching their own culture. Here was the perfect place to meditate upon the mingling of Buddhistic and Christian influences.

Volume I of *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London*, 1893, contains references to Lady E. A. Gordon. Her work "Clear 'Round!" is mentioned on page 231, and her name and that of her husband are in the General List of Members. Both joined on February 23, 1892, and it also notes that they were both in Japan in 1891. See page 180.

We next hear from Lady Gordon when she settled in Tokyo and Kyoto, where she wrote her most important books. Her Japanese life will be considered in the next article.

Further information on the esoteric Buddhist sects and Nestorian Christianity will be found in the following publications of Manly P. Hall as follows:

KOYASAN Booklet

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN WORLD. PRS Journal, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 54

THE SECRET BOOKS OF ZENMUI. PRS Journal, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 20

THE STORY OF NESTORIAN CHRISTIANITY. PRS Journal, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 9

BUDDHISM AND PSYCHOTHERAPY. (Hardbound book)

THE TENDAI SECT—The Buddhism of Universal Enlightenment  
PRS Journal, Vol. 32, No. 3, p. 14



## PART II—THE YEARS IN JAPAN



pproximately thirty years after Lady Gordon made her journey "*Clear 'Round*", I made a similar trip which was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. When I was twenty-three years old, fortuitous circumstances made it possible for me to travel in the Far East, and come into direct contact with Asiatic culture.

Lady Gordon was especially impressed by the people of Korea, China and Japan. Following closely in her footsteps I reached Japan first, arriving shortly after the great earthquake in 1923. Traveling down to Shimonoseki, I crossed to Fuson in Korea. From Seoul the train went to Mukden, the capital of Manchuria, and from there we went on to Peking, China.

There is nothing that broadens insight more rapidly than to visit highly civilized countries in which one is a foreigner and must adjust his thinking to ways of life he has never previously known. There are racial differences, varying standards of artistry, beautiful but unfamiliar architecture and strange gods arranged in rows upon shadowed altars. The traveler suddenly realizes that Heaven is really no respecter of races or nations. Prayers in many languages and addressed to unfamiliar icons are duly answered, and members of distant communities dwell in a condition of spiritual security. In addition to formal state religions are numerous folk cults with devout followers which help uncounted millions to face with inner strength the inevitable adversities of existence.

It would have been strange indeed if Lady Gordon, who was strongly oriented in religious philosophy, had not been impressed by Mahayana Buddhism. She found, as many others have, the numerous similarities between this Far-Eastern belief and our Western Christianity. It must also have occurred to her that these two great faiths complement each other on many obscure points of doctrine. One Buddhist scholar pointed out that Buddhism could be considered an Eastern Christianity. While such thinking



may seem objectionable to Christian religions it did not seem to offend learned members of the Mahayana Sect, many of whom were eager to examine possible Christian contributions to their beliefs.

In any event, Lady Gordon desired to build a bridge of mutual understanding between the eastern and western hemispheres of religion. She knew of course that Gautama Buddha had lived some five hundred years before the beginning of the Christian Era, so it could not be assumed that Christianity had influenced his original teachings. It is well-known however, in religious history, that a remarkable occurrence took place in Buddhism about the beginning of the Christian Era. It was at this time that the moral and ethical teachings of Gautama Buddha became the basis of a religion that was to spread over half the earth and influence the lives of hundreds of millions of human beings.

The great stream of Buddhist descent more or less divided into what are called the "Two Vehicles." The Hinayana (small vehicle), also referred to as the Southern school, retained the austerity of primitive Buddhism. The other branch, the Mahayana (large vehicle) now called the Northern school, introduced the Bodhisattva doctrine. The extraordinary impersonality of the Hinayana system was modified in the Mahayana system and the goal of human endeavor was markedly altered. Instead of the renunciation of life and the solitary search for ultimate peace, came a new concept of human purpose now known as "The Heart Doctrine." Unselfishness was the keyword and the compassionate Bodhisattvas renounced their own ultimate enlightenment in order to return and assist in the salvation of all living things, animate and inanimate.

In India the Bodhisattva image represents the young Prince Gautama Siddhartha before he attained enlightenment. It was at Gandhara that the first radiant likeness of the Buddha was fashioned. He wears a Greek or Near Eastern robe and is shown with long curly hair, a mustache and a small goatee. His hands are in mudras symbolizing preservation and instruction, and he is made to say in the later sacred writings that love is far more important than wisdom, and that without compassionate regard for the weaknesses of human nature, no one can be a true follower of the faith.

Travelling eastward across the dreary deserts that divide the

Khyber Pass from the gates of the Great Wall of China, Buddhist monks went their weary way. They brought with them the sacred books of their faith and established monasteries along the old caravan routes. They finally penetrated the self-imposed isolation of Chinese psychology and established temples and missions. Their first task was to translate their sacred writings into the Chinese language, and while so engaged they ministered to the needs of the sick with clinics and hospitals; advanced educational systems; but participated in no aggressive proselyting. Their high ethical conduct, their serene beliefs and their dedication to good deeds were recognized by the Chinese emperors then ruling at Sian. Through the tolerance of these emperors the Indian missionaries were officially recognized, permitted to teach freely and given the land necessary for their religious centers.

Lady Gordon noted that at least two waves of Christian influence penetrated the Fast East at almost the same time. The Syrian Christian Church was seated at Edessa, and it was from this center that Saint Thomas is said to have made his journey to India. While the westward motion of Christianity from Byzantium and Rome is well-known to scholars, the eastward motion is seldom discussed. The Syrian Christians were followed by another group, the Nestorian Christians, with whom they are frequently confused. John Kesson of the British Museum in his work *The Cross and the Dragon*, London, 1854, writes: "We approach the period when the Nestorians, or rather the Chaldean or Syrian Christians, as they call themselves, spread so rapidly planting Christianity in the heart of Asia carrying it to the remotest East, and giving rise to the belief that they entered the Provinces of China early in the seventh century." In the one hundred and twenty-five years since Kesson's book, new research has established rather firmly that Christianity reached China in the second or third century, and part of Lady Gordon's hypothesis is based upon this earlier date which is sustained by archaeological remains.

Many travelled the roads leading from Antioch or Edessa to the glorious cities of Great Cathay. There were merchants, dealers in jade, and those bartering in spices and luxuries for the courts of Byzantium and Rome. There were also monks, and it is by no means clear whether these were Christian, Buddhist or both. The



latter possibility finds considerable support. In those days Buddhist and Christian monks and priests were simply called *Bonzes* by the Chinese. It is quite possible that these mingled together without conflict and there is still considerable doubt as to what constituted orthodoxy on the caravan routes. It would seem that the streams of Buddhism and Christianity could have reached China about the same time and that each was well-received because of its sincerity and high moral and ethical conduct. The more enlightened emperors of China sincerely desired a contented and peaceful country, and supported all teachings that contributed to knowledge and the elevation of spiritual insight. The Bonzes from foreign lands brought news of the outside world, arts and skills useful to the Chinese and an inspiring Messianic tradition. Buddha had promised that about six hundred years after his death a great teacher would come to the world for the redemption of mankind and the Syrian Christians testified that the Messiah had come. The Buddhist Messiah was to be named Maitreya (universal kindness) and the Christian Messiah taught a doctrine of universal love.

It seems to me that Lady Gordon found Buddhist symbolism helpful in the interpretation of numerous Christian legends. In her book, *The World-Healers*, she gives many examples of parallels between the lives of eastern and western saints, and in some cases the similarities are astonishing and the incidents involved are contemporary. There is nothing to indicate that Lady Gordon actually desired to convert western people to Buddhism. She remained to the end a sincere and dedicated Christian, but her Christianity became inclusive rather than exclusive. She emphasized the fact that the Light of Grace is bestowed upon all human beings who revere truth, practice justice and live in hope of the life everlasting. We all realize that it is difficult or impossible to attain peace on earth while the gods men worship battle for supremacy in the sky above. Religion must always provide incentives impelling to the brotherhood of humanity. In the fifty years since the death of Lady Gordon there have been many changes in our way of life and the need for religious unity is greater than ever before. The several major religions of mankind have lost most of their proselyting zeal, but they have not yet found what Mohammed sought in the cave on Mount Hira, the one original religion of the whole world. Many



sincere believers do not yet realize that religious union would be a magnificent testimony to spiritual enlightenment.

When I was in Kyoto in the Fall of 1923, I was actually in the same hotel with Lady Gordon. She was probably confined to her rooms at that time as I have no recollection of seeing her. From the available information she lived in a small world of books and religious artifacts. She wrote by hand, or may on some occasions have dictated to a secretary, but she must have had an extraordinary memory, for she brought to bear upon her various writings facts and observations from practically every part of the world. All her learning was directed to one end, the demonstration of the unity of Christian and Buddhist beliefs. To accomplish her purpose she had to understand the deepest aspects of Buddhist philosophy. It was quite natural, therefore, that she should have been drawn to the Shingon and Tendai Sects.

In Japan, these corresponded with the "High Church" in the West. The Shingon possibly could be equated with the Roman Catholic Church; the Tendai, with the Church of England. Both sects have elaborate ritualism, highly mystical initiation ceremonies, magnificent vestments and all the paraphernalia of higher sacerdotalism. What is infinitely more to the point is that the founders of both these sects had been in China where they had studied with famous monks, perpetuating the Hindu schools of Buddhism. Kobo Daishi, who founded the Shingon sect stayed at Sian shortly after the erection of the great Nestorian monument. It is inconceivable that in this stronghold of Eastern Christianity he should not have been aware of the story of the life of Christ as it was set forth on this monument and as it had also been circulated among court scholars. Determined to explore this area to the fullest, Lady Gordon studied Shingon Buddhism with the best available teachers.

Information regarding Lady Gordon's life in Japan is derived largely from surviving persons who knew her. Now in advanced age they admit frankly uncertainty concerning dates and details. Apparently she lived for a number of years in Tokyo where she contacted the Waseda University and its founder, Count (later Marquis) Okuma, who after a political career founded a daily newspaper, but is remembered best for the establishment of the

This portrait of Lady Gordon taken shortly before her death, is reproduced here through courtesy of the Shimizu Family.



Waseda University. Lady Gordon knew him well, and her book, *World-Healers*, contains the following encomium: "Dedicated, by special permission, to Count and Countess Okuma with profound admiration for the way in which Their Excellencies exemplify and commend the Principles of the Mahâyana Church by their life-long Patriotism and selfless devotion to "Others" in founding, and maintaining for thirty-six years, a University within their own Park at Waseda and extending its many benefits, regardless of Nationality or Creed, to thousands of Stranger-students from China as well as to numbers from Korea and our own Indian Empire."

According to my good friend, Mr. Yokoyama, he received a call by telephone from Lady Gordon and he went to Tokyo to see her. They immediately became good friends and this pleasant relationship continued until her death. Mr. Yokoyama sold her a number of antiques, exclusively religious items. He noted that she was a deep student and had much knowledge of Shingon Buddhism, and seemed always anxious to obtain works of art relating to this sect. Mr. Yokoyama then went on to say that about ten years after his



first meeting with Lady Gordon she came to Kyoto and stayed at the Kyoto Hotel. To his best memory she lived in her rooms in the Hotel for about five years, and during much of that time she was ill. He believed that she died in the eighth or ninth year of Taisho, but according to other reports the death actually occurred in 1925. Mr. Yokoyama was the executor of Lady Gordon's estate but does not believe that she left a formal will. He notes that none of her relatives made inquiries, and final arrangements for her funeral seem to have been left to the British Consul. Japanese friends and two non-Japanese were present at her funeral ceremony which took place at Toji Temple in Kyoto. Mr. Yokoyama further added that he remembered Lady Gordon as a very kind and genteel person, deeply religious and amazingly well-informed on many subjects. All of her collections were disposed of by the British Consul, because no one called for her property or possessions. Mr. Yokoyama repeated that she was a very unusual lady and that they had many discussions together about Eastern Philosophy and Buddhist Icons.

In October, 1972, my sister-in-law and her husband made one of their regular trips to Mount Koya. This is the principal center of the Shingon (or true-word) Buddhism. It has been called the Valhalla of Japanese Buddhism, and the great necropolis contains tombs or memorials honoring hundreds of distinguished Japanese persons. I asked my sister-in-law to inquire about Lady Gordon and her association with the Koyasan community. There are no hotels at Mount Koya and it is customary for visitors to be assigned lodgings in one of the temples. My relatives stayed at the Rengejoin Temple and mentioned Lady Gordon to the Abbot of this Temple—Abbot Soeda. When Lady Gordon's name was mentioned, the Abbot became quite emotional and said that it was the first time since her death that anyone had asked about her. Abbot Soeda said that he had known Lady Gordon when he was a boy in his teens. Among memorable experiences, he had helped to carry her ashes up the mountain from Hashimoto to Koyasan.

From the records at Mount Koya, Lady Gordon departed from this life in the Kyoto Hotel on June 27, 1925, at 8:00 A.M. She had been ill for some time and had left her hotel room only once over a period of several years. A young waiter in the hotel took



a personal interest in her and attended her regularly. I have been told that the waiter is still alive, but has long since retired from service. He is supposed to frequent the local hot springs, but as yet he has eluded me. Lady Gordon seems to have died of liver or kidney trouble. She was a large and heavy woman, and the Koyasan records contain these facts: that no relative or person who had known her before she came to Japan appeared to direct her funeral or arrange for the settlement of her estate. The funeral was at Kyogokoku-ji (Toji), the principal Shingon temple of Kyoto, where her body was cremated. Her ashes were then divided, one-half taken to Koyasan and the other half sent to Korea. Here Abbot Soeda says that she did leave a will and substantiates that Mr. Yokoyama was the executor of her estate.

Abbot Soeda mentioned also that Mrs. Gordon had left approximately seven hundred books to the Koyasan Library. He then sent Mr. and Mrs. Avery to the monastery library, accompanied by his son. The books had been distributed throughout the library collection according to their subject matter. Mr. Avery examined several items that had belonged to Lady Gordon and found the books heavily annotated; in some cases all margins of the pages were filled with her notes. Also present was a New Testament in parallel Greek and Latin, which might imply that she read these languages.

Lady Gordon, deeply influenced by Shingon Buddhism, received instructions from two professors in one of the Kyoto Universities. Their names are included in the photostats of her death notices and they were among those at her funeral. Two non-Japanese were also present, one a Mrs. Marsham and the other a person presumably by the name of Willoughby (the transliteration from the Japanese makes this name doubtful). At Mount Koya, religious dignitaries attended her memorial services. She was evidently highly respected and generally accepted as a disciple of the Shingon school. A memorial monument to Lady Gordon was erected near the entrance to the great cemetery at Mount Koya. It stands about ten feet to the right of the Nestorian Stone as you face this stone. Her name is inscribed in Japanese and her monument is in Buddhist stupa form with Sanskrit spell-letters on the front.



The entrance to the necropolis of Mount Koya. Lady Gordon's monument is directly behind the elaborate pagoda.

In the obituary notices to be considered next, Lady Gordon's name is followed by three idiograms which can be translated "Mrs." but are in a very polite form. According to a Japanese friend it would be more proper to translate the characters as "Lady," as in the sense of a titled person. This gives contemporary support that she was most frequently referred to as "Lady Gordon," and in one of her books, her name appears as "Hon. Mrs. Gordon."

In the memorials on file in the archives of the Mount Koya Monastery, there is some information relating to Lady Gordon not available in other sources. There is an eulogy entitled "Lament! Mrs. Gordon passed away by Y. E. Mizuhara." From this we learn that word of Lady Gordon's passing reached Mount Koya on the morning of June 27th. Mr. Mizuhara was deeply moved by the sad tidings for he had first met her nearly twenty-five years earlier when he was studying the secret doctrine with her at Mount Koya. This statement presents a difficulty, for it would indicate that she was living in Japan in 1901 or 1902, which seems to conflict with other statements. Mr. Mizuhara was also present at the dedication of the Nestorian monument placed by Lady Gordon at the entrance of the Koyasan cemetery. A close friendship developed between Lady Gordon and the priests in this mountain monastery.



One of them, the Venerable Nomoto, exchanged letters with her for many years. Remembering their pleasant associations, Mr. Mizuhara states that the news of Lady Gordon's passing "... drives me to tears with sudden sadness." He remembered that she had offered books to the Koya College and to the Capitol Spirit Treasure House. When the Patriarch, Venerable Huji Mura was informed of Lady Gordon's death he asked Mr. Mizuhara to go to Kyoto as an official delegate for the Temple. He traveled by train and reached the Kyoto station at 9:00 P.M. on June 27. Going immediately to the hotel he met Mr. Awakawa, Dr. Hamada, Mr. William and other guests in her apartment. Mr. Mizuhara then writes: "After brief greetings expressing regret, I knelt facing the picture of the late Mrs. Gordon. Also in the room was hanging a portrait of Kobo Daishi, a picture of Kannon Bosatsu and other pictures of Buddha. Mrs. Gordon covered with a white cloth, was lying with her head to the north and facing toward the west, quiet in the eternal sleep. There were white lillies around her head, a slowly burning fire in the fireplace smelling of the incense fragrance and the white nameplate which bears her Buddhist name as 'The Great Sister, Self-realized of the Wonderful Truth of the Secret Grandeur Center.'"

The ceremonies lasted all night and included the reading of Sutras belonging to the Shingon Sect and by these rites Lady Gordon "was delivered to the other world." The next day at 2:00 in the afternoon she was cremated and the ashes were dedicated in the East Temple (Toji). The full Buddhist funeral ceremony was scheduled to be held on July 3rd, the seventh day after her death, and this rite was personally conducted by Venerable Matsu Naga. Mr. Mizuhara attended these rites and while he was at Toji he made arrangements for the elaborate funeral service at Mount Koya.

In the services on July 3, Lady Gordon's spirit was dedicated to the Shrine of the Spirits in the East Temple where her spirit will reside forever in its treasure garden. Among the guests attending this occasion were the British Ambassador, the Duke Nirara, Dr. Hamada, Mr. Nishida and other Western residents. For forty-nine days there were services to the spirit of Lady Gordon and it was after this that Mr. Awakawa and her friends took part of her ashes



Lady Gordon's memorial  
at Mount Koya.



to Koyasan. The obituary notice of the final services at Koyasan includes the following tribute to Lady Gordon: "As long as there is the Moon shedding its pale light over Koyasan Lady Gordon's spirit will rest in peace in the mountain. As long as the spiritual fire is burning on the Koya Mountain, this event shall remain in the history of Koyasan, never failing to give some moving impression to those who belong to the Shingon Sect as well as to many others who believe in Buddhism."

In another somewhat briefer obituary notice preserved at Mount Koya, Lady Gordon is described as "the English lady who had been engaged in a research to find the common points of fusion between Buddhism and Christianity for twenty years since her coming to Japan." It is added that she passed away quietly as though falling into a deep sleep, watched by her kind friends and reciting the Holy Name of her Master Teacher.

Mr. Awakawa, already mentioned, was the manager of the Kyoto Hotel, and was among the fifteen persons from the Kyoto area. At the entrance to the monastery grounds the group was met

by Venerable Mizuhara of Shin O-Gin, and ushered into the sacred grounds. On the next day, July 4, the burial ceremony was held at 1:00 in the afternoon. On the altar was Lady Gordon's portrait and her memorial nameplate. There were about five hundred persons present on this occasion including faculty members and students of the Koyasan College and Middle School. At 2:30 P.M., after the ceremony was over, the ashes were carried to the burial site.

The third obituary notice adds some further information. Her studies in Japanese Buddhism were conducted with the professors of the Imperial University of Japan, Dr. Takakusu and Dr. Sakaki. She was much favored by two Shingon patriarchs, Mitsumon and Tsugugi, who assisted her in her researches into the secret teachings of the Shingonshu.

#### LADY GORDON AND THE NESTORIAN MONUMENT

In her effort to trace the eastern course of Christianity, Lady Gordon became greatly intrigued by the "Talking Stone of Sian," more generally known as the Nestorian monument. This great stone tablet standing on the back of a tortoise was erected in Sian, the old capital of China in A.D. 781. The face and sides of the monument are inscribed with 1,780 ancient Chinese characters and some writing in Syrian. It commemorates the arrival of a small company of Christian priests at the Imperial Court in A.D. 635. (For more detailed discussion of this stone see PRS Journal Winter, 1969—article, *The Story of Nestorian Christianity*.)

When agitation against Christianity arose in China the great stone was buried for safety and remained hidden until 1625. Notified of this valuable find the Governor of Sian ordered the monument to be transported to a prominent place, protected by a roof and thoroughly cleaned of ancient encrustations. It was later placed on public exhibition and the Emperor protected it by a pagoda and ordered it to be placed under the protection of priests.

After Lady Gordon had become aware of this stone she caused a copy of it to be made which in due time was erected near the entrance to the necropolis of Koyasan. Her gift is mentioned in *An*





The dedication of Lady Gordon's copy of the Nestorian Stone at Koyasan in 1911. She stands at the left with hand on the stone.

*Official Guide to Japan*, Tokyo, 1933, and many subsequent editions. It is uncertain at this time whether Lady Gordon's replica was actually made in China or was carved in Japan from stone rubbing (ink squeezes) taken from the monument. If the latter is the case, it may explain why there are minor errors in the design which brought great unhappiness to Doctor Fritz Holm. In 1907-08, Doctor Holm, Commander of an expedition to Sian, made and transported to New York at "great expense" a ten-foot replica of the Nestorian monument. According to the *Open Court*, Volume



XVI (beginning on p. 686), Doctor Holm received many distinctions for his labor, including a decoration from the Pope. In the course of time six governments were given full-size reproductions in plaster, and later Yale University arranged for a similar reproduction. From June, 1908, until June, 1916, Doctor Holm's monument was on display by loan at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and was then purchased by a private party.

It seems that a Professor Saeki, of the faculty of the Waseda University wrote a book, *The Nestorian Monument in China*, and as in the case of Lady Gordon's *World-Healers*, there is a preface by Prof. A. H. Sayce. After discussing several matters, Dr. Holm is deeply annoyed that Professor Saeki describes the Mount Koya stone as a "replica" of the original monument. Holm insists that it is "not a replica of the Nestorian monument, nor a facsimile, nor a reproduction, nor a copy of any kind whatsoever." He reproduces with his article a photograph of the original monument for comparison with the Mount Koya stone. There are several minor differences, as we have already suggested, which might have resulted from the stone cutters working from ink squeezes. The base of the monument has been considerably conventionalized, but it never contained any of the significant inscriptions. The differences at the top involve decorative details and also show minor variations, but the general appearance is approximately the same. From the standpoint of scholarly investigation, Doctor Holm's objections are largely neutralized by his own statement later in his article: "On the other hand, it is quite possible that the inscription itself on the Japanese stela, is entirely faultless, especially if rubbings (décalques) of the original text were employed in chiseling the inscription. Photographs indeed, would never suffice."

It is noteworthy that in a proclamation issued in Nanking on the fifth day of the first month of the first year of the Chinese republic, 1912, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen stated, "On looking back we find that prior to the assumption of the Throne by the Manchus, China had been open to foreign intercourse and commerce, and there existed freedom of religious faith. Marco Polo's writings on the Nestorian monument in Sian is clear evidence of this." Lady Gordon's replica of the Nestorian monument was dedicated in 1911 at Mount Koya, and in her book, *"World-Healers,"* there is a con-

siderable discussion on the ceremony and a photograph of the Shingon priests who participated in the observances. The most important point is that the Buddhists of Koyasan regarded the monument with profound admiration and scholars among them examined the inscriptions and analyzed their contents with complete open-mindedness and respect. Lady Gordon discussed early Christian practices with many of the best educated priests among them and they unanimously agreed that the basic teachings of the two faiths were entirely compatible.

The first of Lady Gordon's books to be published in Japan was "*Messiah, the Ancestral Hope of the Ages*, 'THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS,' as proved from The Records on the sun-dried bricks of Babylonia, the papyri and pyramids of Egypt, the frescoes of the Roman Catacombs, and on the Chinese incised Memorial stone at Cho'ang," published in Tokyo in 1909, by Keiseisha.

On the title page of this work Lady Gordon is referred to as a Member of the Society of Biblical Archeology, and of the Japan Society, London, and also of the World's Chinese Students' Federation, Shanghai. The book is dedicated to: "My many kind Japanese friends, (Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian,) These Records of the pre-heathen faiths and Messianic Hope are gratefully and affectionately inscribed."

A few years ago I visited the Isseido, one of the most prominent book sellers in the Kondo, the district where most of the book stores of Tokyo are located, and was fortunate enough to find a very fine copy of Lady Gordon's *Messiah*. The book is bound in a semi-Japanese binding with cord ties at the back, full cloth stamped in gold. On the front is the inscription, "In the name of the Messiah," beneath which is a line of seven swastikas also stamped in gold. On the back is a detail from the great Nestorian Stone with a line of six swastikas below. In Japanese Buddhism, the swastika is found on the breasts of Buddhist images to symbolize the heart center. The book is in Lady Gordon's usual style with numerous footnotes and references to both Eastern and Western sources. The illustrations, many delicately tinted, include monuments in Japan, China, Korea and the British Isles.

In this work Lady Gordon devotes considerable attention to the Great Amida Triad, now the principal treasure of the Zenkoji,





The Zenkoji Temple at Nagano.

the Great Buddhist Temple of the Tendai Sect at Nagano. This Sanctuary, one of the most famous in Japan was founded A.D. 670, but none of the original buildings has survived. The three images comprising this icon, Amida, Kannon and Daiseishai, are believed by the pious to have been made by Gautama Buddha, himself, out of gold found on Mount Meru, the center of the universe. The Triad, which was for some time in China and Korea was presented to the Emperor of Japan by a Korean King in A.D. 552 at the time of the introduction of Buddhism into Japan. Enemies of the new faith made several efforts to destroy the image, but it was miraculously preserved by Hunda Yoshimitsu with the assistance of his wife and son. These three are venerated as the founders of the Nagano fane. The story of the symbolism of the images is developed by Lady Gordon to support her conviction that Christian influence is present on many early Buddhist images.

I visited the Zenkoji Temple a few years ago and secured a number of ofuda (temple souvenir pictures) showing the Triad. The image itself is kept in a reliquary made in the fourteenth century and enshrouded by a brocade curtain. As a special favor one of the priests may lift the curtain, thus revealing the outermost of the seven boxes which enclose the icon. The actual Triad is not exhibited.



The Amida Triad in the Zenkoji Temple at Nagano. Hunda Yoshimitsu and his wife are shown worshipping at the base of the Triad.



*Messiah* mentions another work by Lady Gordon which we have not seen. The title is "A Speaking Stone," which "can be had separately in Japanese, (translated by Dr. Iyan Takakusu, Professor of Sanskrit, Imperial University) and reprinted from the Shinbukkya, 'New Buddhism Magazine,' August, 1909, at 5 sen per copy, from the Keiseisha, Tokyo." This is probably a Japanese translation of the first chapter of *Messiah*.

Possibly the most important of Lady Gordon's books is the "*World-Healers*," or, *The Lotus Gospel and its Bodhisattvas, Compared with Early Christianity*; with a letter by A. H. Sayce, a world map, index, 65 illustrations, bibliography and folding map; published in Tokyo by Maruzen Kabushiki-Kaisha, 1911; revised and enlarged edition, 1913.

In addition to the Tokyo publisher, the 1913 Edition lists also the Christian Literature Society, Shanghai, and Eugene L. Morice, 9, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, as distributors of the work.

Page viii (8) contains the following Introductory Letter by A. H. Sayce (1845-1933),

March 12, 1912.

MY DEAR MRS. GORDON,

I have read through the proofs of your new work—I wish I had had time to study them—and I have been instructed by your learning and research, and amazed by the extent of it.

"World-Healers, or the Lotus Gospel," is one of the most interesting books that has yet been written upon COMPARATIVE RELIGION, and is full of new and striking parallels and facts.

You seem to me to have proved what an intimate relation there is between Buddhism and Early Christianity.

It is very welcome to me as confirming what I have been trying to point out—the dependence of early Sino-Japanese art upon Byzantine as well as upon earlier Greek art.

In connection with this Mr. Tsuda tells me that the Shōso-in collection at Nara contains glass which must have been made by Byzantine workmen.

You doubtless knew that among the terra-cottas discovered by Prof. Petrie at Memphis, and belonging to B.C. 100—A.D. 100, are Buddhist figures.

We know that there were Indians in Alexandria in the Ptolemaic age who brought Buddhistic Teaching with them.

If you will allow me to say so, your new work seems to me the best you have written and will make an epoch in the investigation of Oriental Religion. It is in the highest degree illuminative.

Believe me to be yours very sincerely,

Queen's College, Oxford

A. H. SAYCE.

Archibald Henry Sayce is described in the Encyclopedia Britannica 1964 Edition, as a "British philologist, whose services to Babylonian and Assyrian scholarship cannot be overestimated . . ." His interests must have closely paralleled those of Lady Gordon for he was a member of the Old Testament Revision Company, and Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford.

In her preface to the *World-Healers etc.*, the authoress writes, "that modern Christianity would be deepened and spiritualized beyond conception by coming into contact with the Teachings of the venerable Mahayana and their expression in the wondrous Art Treasures of the Far East, there is very little doubt."

In the *Open Court*, Vol. 16 (beginning p. 686) the editor, presumably Dr. Paul Carus, reviewed *World-Healers* and reproduced several illustrations from Lady Gordon's work. His opening remarks, though certainly intended to be complimentary, led to a firm rebuke from the authoress. Dr. Carus writes of the book that, . . . "It is brim full of interesting material on comparative religion,



and the gospel it preaches is a kind of combination of Christianity with Buddhism." He made a further statement which also did not meet the approval of Lady Gordon, ". . . While the data here collected are not treated with the critical reserve and accuracy needed for such an undertaking, we have found in these two volumes much that is of general interest."

Lady Gordon evidently received a copy of the article by Dr. Carus and wrote a reply in which she expressed her dissatisfaction. This letter was published in the *Open Court*, September, 1915 (pp. 574-575). The following extracts from Lady Gordon's epistle are interesting and informative.

"May I criticize your review of my *World Healers*? You don't seem to have got at the kernel of it! In the first place, you will, on reference to the Royal Asiatic Societys' (Seoul Branch) *Transactions* for 1914, see my lecture on discoveries in Korea which are wonderfully confirmatory of my theories in the book . . .

In your review you say: "The gospel it preaches is a kind of combination of Christianity with Buddhism." Now my book does not "preach a gospel." It simply brings into more light what Dr. Timothy Richard already set forth in his translation of *Saddharma Pundarika* (known in Japan as the Lotus Gospel); and which several scholars have long since concluded may be an *apocryphal* Christian Gospel, such as the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Gospel of the Hebrews, etc. . . .

In the third paragraph of your review you very justly criticize my imperfect methods; so please allow me to explain that Prof. A. H. Sayce, when he was in Japan, kindly went through all my manuscripts *most* carefully, and on my telling him exactly the points you have criticized, he said: "Never mind that, just put down everything you have found up to date, and then let others from that mass of material weed out and arrange all in proper order." You see that being very delicate, and with eyes troubling me, I must do either one thing or the other. If I stop to sift and criticize accurately, I cannot write down the facts that keep crowding in and which, alas! other people out here (now that Dr. A. Lloyd is dead) take no interest in.

I believe the historical data are as nearly accurate as possible, for, having studied with my dear friend, Max Muller, I am pos-



essed with the idea of historical data being essential, I have been at infinite pains to take out all I have put down. In many cases such contradictory dates are given that it has been an immense labor to verify them. This is an explanation, not an excuse!"

An essay by E. A. Gordon appears in Vol. V (1914) of *The Transactions* of the Korean Branch of the Royal Society under the title *Some Recent Discoveries in Korean Temples and Their Relationship to Early Eastern Christianity*. There are thirteen pages of text and one illustration of the approach to Sokkuram, North Kyongsang, an ancient religious site in the Kingdom of Silla. The article opens with the statement, "It is with very great pleasure that I endeavor to comply with the request of your Recording Secretary to send you a paper embodying my findings in Buddhism during my recent visit to Korea."

Lady Gordon then explains that she is more and more convinced that there are evidences of Early Christianity in Korea prior to, as well as synchronous with the Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople, whom the Council of Ephesus condemned for heresy, A.D. 431. She then describes a majestic image of the Maitreya Buddha (or Bodhisattva) carved in sandalwood that was set up soon after the Great Council held at Gandhara near the Indus at the place where the Northern and Southern Schools of Buddhism separated, and the Northern School moved eastward. She later states her belief that the Mahayana doctrines of The Great Way of Salvation, reached Korea certainly in the 4th Century, if not earlier, from Gandhara. She quotes Dr. Aurel Stein, the principal authority on the Buddhist remains in Chinese Turkistan, who was convinced that "... all the Buddhist art which reached Korea and Japan found its way from Gandhara and Graeco-Baktria through Khotan." It was from Khotan, referred to as the Jade Kingdom, that Indian merchants brought their wares, traveling from Gandhara to the Imperial Chinese Court at Sian.

A point of unusual interest was Lady Gordon's visit to a wonderful cave, which she calls *Il-sun-kun* in Silla. This is the chapel of Sokkuram, partly cut from living rock with some additional masonry as in the rock caverns in India. The description of the cave temple given by Lady Gordon is both detailed and accurate. "Ere leaving the Cave of Il-sun-kun one must note the arrange-

ment of images in tiers, the upper one being cut in niches, as it is the self same as that in the Lama temple at Mukden, and in the apse of the basilica of St. Sofia "the Holy Wisdom," at Constantinople (founded by Constantine and re-built by Justinian, but now a Muslim Mosque); and we must not forget that Abbé Huc and other Catholic Fathers found that the Lamaism of Tibet contained "all the germs of the Catholic Faith—only needing development." Those interested in further information regarding this cave temple, including excellent diagrams and illustrations, are referred to *The Arts of Korea* by Evelyn McCune, published by Tuttle and Co., Vermont and Japan, 1962. This author especially mentions the extremely high quality of the Sokkuram art, and considers the site to be unique and one of the greatest treasures of the Orient.

Lady Gordon found the Sokkuram cave and its immediate environment in a most delapidated and ruinous condition. At this point in her monograph, she inserts the following footnote, "... On reaching Seoul, I had the privilege of laying these facts and the ruined condition of this Wonderful Cave, before His Excellency, the Governor General and other high officials, and of urging upon them the importance of conserving this unique World-round Treasure, and I have since had the pleasure of hearing that this glorious Cave is now being repaired, and its characteristic Art preserved at the National Expense. (August 1913)." Under her photograph of this cave in *Symbols of 'the Way'*, Lady Gordon notes, "H. E. Count Terayuchi has made it a National Treasure."

Comparing recent studies of this cave with Lady Gordon's earlier interpretations, her point of view has been largely justified. There is a distinct Indian influence. For example, the principal image of Buddha has been placed in the center of the rock-hewn chapel to permit circumambulation, and the quality of the sculpturing is much finer than that found in other Korean religious monuments of the same period.

In a little work, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, by L. George Paik, Professor of History in Chosen Christian College, which was published in 1929, the author mentions Lady Gordon as presenting plausible proofs that Korean Buddhism was strongly influenced by Christianity. There are three footnotes, two of which deal with her article *Some Recent Discoveries in Korean*



*Temples and Their Relationship to Early Eastern Christianity*, and one comparing her findings with those of Professor Frederick Starr, one of the outstanding orientalist of the period. Professor Starr also acknowledged his careful study of Lady Gordon's article. His book, *Korean Buddhism*, Boston 1918, lists two of Lady Gordon's books in the Bibliography, and mentions her in the text.

On May 8, 1916, Lady Gordon published *Symbols of 'The Way'—Far East and West*. It was fully illustrated and issued at Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Kukuoka and Sendai by Maruzen & Company, Ltd., and has a fine frontispiece portrait of the authoress. Her dedication reads, "To all my Far Eastern friends in grateful recognition for their ever-ready sympathy and aid during so many years of happy investigation among the venerable sanctuaries of Korea and Japan. 8 May, 1916, Taisho V."

The front cover of the book carries the title and inscription in Chinese characters and falling lotus petals. Below is the Buddhist swastika in a Flaming Pearl resting on an open lotus. On the back cover is the Star of David with Hebrew letters in the center. On the fly-leaf of our copy is a card indicating the book was presented to some person unnamed with the author's compliments. On the upper half of the half-title, has been laid down what appears to be a fragment of Lady Gordon's manuscript.

This volume examines three world epics of the soul and appears to be based upon a lecture delivered by Lady Gordon at Waseda University before the Kyoyukai Buddhist Society, on its thirtieth anniversary, April 17, 1915. It deals with the subject of pilgrimage upward through the three worlds as set forth in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress*, and the *Hsi yu chi*, a great Asiatic allegory written by a Chinese monk at the close of the 13th Century. It is also noted that it *antedates* Dante's allegory by about 15 years. This Chinese classic was translated into English by Dr. Timothy Richard of Shanghai. When Marquis Okuma, Premier of Japan and founder of Waseda University, became acquainted with Dr. Richard's translation, he ordered the introduction to be published in Japanese. These facts are incorporated into Lady Gordon's address.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress* are available to all interested persons, but the *Hsi yu chi* is compara-



tively unknown outside of Asia. Extracts from the work have been published with commentaries by Edward Werner in his interesting volume, *Myths and Legends of China*, published in 1922 and reprinted at later dates.

Dr. Werner notes that the *Hsi yu chi* sets forth a journey to the Western Paradise to procure Buddhist Scriptures. The hero of the story (the Pilgrim) is actually Hiuen-Tsiang whom Werner believes to be a personification of Conscience. He is accompanied by a Monkey Fairy representing unregenerated human nature, a Pig Fairy revealing the coarser passions of man and a Priest who serves as a baggage carrier. Werner likens him to Mr. Faithful in *The Pilgrims' Progress*, who stands for human character with its inevitable weaknesses, but good intentions. These four are mysteriously selected by the Bodhisattva Kwan Yin. That the regeneration of humanity is intended is implied by the dominant theme of the book which tells how the monkey became a god.

These accounts of pilgrimage explain the title of Lady Gordon's book, *Symbols of 'The Way'*. She treats her material in her usual manner, mostly short paragraphs including many quotations from Eastern and Western religious sources, and elaborate annotations. Included in the book is the photograph of the Korean Cave Temple of Sokkuram, which appeared in her article published in Vol. V of *The Transactions* of the Korean Branch of The Royal Asiatic Society. In a letter to us from this Society, the Corresponding Secretary notes that in an article entitled, *The Diamond Mountains*, *Transactions*, Vol. XIII, p. 18, 1922, the Rev. James S. Gale mentions that when he was visiting a remote mountain temple on September 26, 1917, he met a monk who knew Lady Gordon and who had a copy of her *Symbols of 'The Way'*.

So far as is known, Lady Gordon's last major literary work was *Asian Cristology and the Mahayana*. ("Cristology" was probably a typographical error for "Christology"). This volume includes a reprint of the century-old *Indian Church History* by Thomas Yeates, and an extensive supplement with the title *Syriac Christianity and Daijo Bukkyo* by E. A. Gordon. The book is well-illustrated with a number of plates in color and a sketch map. This volume was published in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Yokohama, Fukuoka and Sendai by Maruzen & Company, Ltd., 1921.

Thomas Yeates (1768-1839), was a prolific writer on antiquarian subjects, especially orientalism and early Christianity. He held various positions and was for a time Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature, and an assistant in the Printed Book Department of the British Museum. When only fourteen years old, he appears to have been the Secretary to the Society for Promoting Constitutional Information. This group included the distinguished orientalist, Sir William Jones, among its members.

Lady Gordon, impressed by Yeates' book on Indian Church History that had been long out-of-print re-issued it with her own notes. She also added numerous illustrations and a comprehensive index. *Asian Cristology* may be considered therefore, as a summation of her ideas and convictions bearing upon Asian Christianity. In addition to material which had appeared in earlier volumes she added further details of substantial value.

In her foreword Lady Gordon makes the following statement: "TO THE CHILDREN OF THE EAST this volume of Heirlooms is reverently dedicated, asking them, when noting its deficiencies, to kindly consider the fact that but for the deep conviction of the vital importance of responding to the urgent call made a century ago by Mr. Thomas Yeates to investigate the Religion of China and the Far East—a then untrodden field—the writer could not have accomplished her plan of reprinting his valuable *Indian Church History* and adding thereto the results gained by her own personal researches, during many years of travel and ensuing physical infirmity up to the present Year of Grace."

Lady Gordon's supplement consists of sixty-one notes, all of which have intriguing titles. Note 16, headed Gog and Magog, discusses the possibility that the Wall of Gog and Magog which is supposed to have shut in the Ten Tribes of Israel was actually the Great Wall of China. Marco Polo makes an allusion to the country of Gog and Magog. Note 39 deals with "A New Star." Here Lady Gordon introduces a Syriac document of probably the fourth century, in which it is written "All these things of the Assyrians, from the days of Moses to Cyrus, the PERSIANS were on their guard and *watching to see* when the word of Balaam would be fulfilled . . ." She then notes the correspondence between this star and the Star of David, which in turn occurs in mandalas of esoteric



Buddhism. In Note 51, she considers the possibility that Marco Polo may have visited the Cave Temples at Tun Huang in Chinese Turkistan. She quotes Sir Henry Yule in his notes on Marco Polo: "Then, as for centuries before, was diffused over Asia, to an extent of which there is but a faint conception generally, Nestorian Christianity which had a chain of Bishops and Metropolitans extending from Jerusalem to Peking during the Early and Middle Ages."

All students of early Christianity will find Yeates' book with Lady Gordon's commentary an extraordinary source work. It is impossible to condense this volume because each line contains significant ideas.

In a list of Lady Gordon's writings is mentioned a further article, *Heirlooms of Early Christianity Visible in Japan*. This article appeared in *Japan Tourist*, 1921.

There are occasional references to Lady Gordon in books by Western writers of her generation. For example, in *Epochs in Buddhist History (The Haskell Lectures—1921)* by Kenneth J. Saunders, and published by the University of Chicago Press — 1924, the author writes, (page 67) "I had recently the privilege of listening to an exposition of Buddhism by a Japanese monk, and my companion asked: 'Is this not a modernized Buddhism?' The next day, as I was trying to give my version of Christianity to a group of Buddhist professors, one of them exclaimed: 'That is exactly what we believe about God. Is it not neo-Christianity?' I could only give them a copy of the Fourth Gospel, and my revered friend, The Honorable Mrs. E. A. Gordon, whose influence among Buddhist priests of Japan is very far-reaching, tells me that when she had given a copy of this book to a monk of the sect which makes most of the 'Lotus,' he changed entirely in his attitude, which had been offensive, and came back exclaiming: 'This is a Buddhist book, or I am reading my own ideas into it.'"

L. Adams Beck (E. Barrington), in her book *The Perfume of the Rainbow*, describes at some length the Chinese Pilgrims' Progress, and was obviously familiar with Lady Gordon's book *Symbols of 'the Way'*. Mrs. Barrington notes that the original work is a vast storehouse for stories and dramas and has furnished subjects for countless pictures. "The Hon. Mrs. Gordon discovered valuable frescoes from it in the Diamond Facing-South Temple in



Korea." Mrs. Barrington lived for many years in a Buddhist temple in Japan, and I had the pleasure of knowing the young priest who was her secretary. She died in Japan.

In the July 1921 issue of *Asia Magazine*, there is an article, *A Summer Pilgrimage to Sacred Koya-san* by Lucy Fletcher Brown. She was a friend of Lady Gordon and visited Mount Koya at a time when such a pilgrimage was not only difficult, but dangerous. In spite of a heavy storm which turned the road into a river of mud, Mrs. Brown reached the summit and presented a letter of personal introduction. She writes, "I bore a letter to one Nemoto San from Lady Gordon, a distinguished lady traveler and Buddhist scholar known to the monks of Koya."

Since Lady Gordon's death, there have been many changes in East-West relationships. It has become evident that political and social problems of nations cannot be solved without religious insight, but we are still confronted with doctrinal differences difficult to arbitrate. Colonel Robert Ingersoll once made the observation that the Chinese were building libraries while Europeans still lived in caves. Asia has already passed through many of the trials and tribulations that now confront us. They have much to learn from the West, but we also could benefit from the empirical wisdom of our oriental brethren.

Lady Gordon was a pioneer orientalist—not in the formal sense of the term, but through the intuitional realization of the unity of all religions. She devoted many years of her life to a strengthening of Christian-Buddhist friendship. She found that the Shingon sect with which she had special affinity appreciated her endeavors and supported the program which she advocated.

It would seem regrettable that the dedicated labors of Elizabeth Anna Gordon should not receive proper recognition. The present monograph reveals that already much of her life story is no longer available. Perhaps, however, further research will give us a fuller insight into the life and labor of this gracious lady. As time passes and as our understanding of Eastern faiths broadens and deepens, Lady Gordon's books should be reprinted for the benefit of all who value world religious unity.